

Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2005

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Consumer Income

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Current Population Reports

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This report focuses on the child support income that custodial parents reported receiving from noncustodial parents living elsewhere, as well as other types of support, such as health insurance and non-cash assistance.¹ The most recent data in

this report are from the Child Support Supplement to the April 2006 Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides information about the amount of child support received during the 2005 calendar year.² The report also shows the latest

¹ The custodial parent is the parent with whom the child or children lived during the survey interview when their other parent lived outside the household, although there may be a joint- or split-custody arrangement.

² The population represented (the population universe) is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States, 15 years of age or older, who have their own children under 21 years old living with them while the other parent lives outside the household.

Text Box 1

Since, in some states, child support can be ordered by a court until a child is 21 years old or completes college, this report covers parents' own children under 21, rather than applying the U.S. Census Bureau's usual definition of children as those under 18 years of age. Some children living with neither biological parent, such as those living with grandparents or foster parents, may also be eligible for child support but are not included in this report.

Some households in the sample also participated in the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the 2006 CPS, where additional supplemental information, such as income and health insurance coverage in the preceding year, was also collected. Changes made to the April CPS supplement in 1994 do not allow comparisons between these data and CPS data collected before that year. These changes included refining the screening of potential respondents,

restructuring the questionnaire to accommodate computerizing the survey, revising terminology that refers to types of child support agreements or awards, increasing the detail in questions about the amount of child support due, including overdue child support (back support), and adding new questions on pass-through payments (child support collected for public assistance recipients by a state enforcement office, some of which passes through to recipients). The amount of child support payments received by recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), formerly known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), is likely underreported because some states retain some or all child support collected on behalf of children of custodial parents.

Additional information and detailed tables are available via the Internet at www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/childsupport.html.

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

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Table 1.

Comparison of Custodial Parent Population and Those With Child Support Awarded, Due, and Received: 1993–2005

(Numbers in thousands as of spring of the following year. Parents living with own children under 21 years of age whose other parent is not living in the home. Amounts in 2005 dollars)

Item	1993		1995		1997		1999		2001		2003		2005	
	Number	Standard error	Number	Standard error	Number	Standard error	Number	Standard error	Number	Standard error	Number	Standard error	Number	Standard error
ALL CUSTODIAL PARENTS														
Total	13,690	286	13,715	301	13,949	303	13,529	299	13,383	282	13,951	288	13,605	285
Awarded child support	7,800	219	7,967	232	7,876	231	7,945	232	7,916	219	8,376	225	7,802	218
Percent	57.0	1.1	58.1	1.1	56.5	1.1	58.7	1.1	59.1	1.1	60.0	1.0	57.3	1.1
Due child support	6,688	204	6,958	217	7,018	218	6,791	215	6,924	205	7,256	210	6,809	204
Average child support due	\$4,764	\$113	\$5,173	\$135	\$5,031	\$110	\$5,570	\$159	\$5,562	\$259	\$5,416	\$93	\$5,584	\$122
Average child support received	\$3,101	\$114	\$3,409	\$116	\$3,352	\$104	\$3,269	\$96	\$3,485	\$140	\$3,713	\$135	\$3,643	\$106
Received any child support	5,070	178	5,269	190	5,282	190	5,005	185	5,119	177	5,548	184	5,259	180
Percent	75.8	1.3	75.7	1.4	75.3	1.4	73.7	1.4	73.9	1.3	76.5	1.2	77.2	1.3
Received full amount of child support	2,466	125	2,945	142	3,240	149	3,066	145	3,093	138	3,290	143	3,192	140
Percent	36.9	1.5	42.3	1.6	46.2	1.6	45.1	1.6	44.7	1.5	45.3	1.5	46.9	1.5
Not awarded child support	5,889	192	5,747	198	6,074	203	5,584	195	5,466	183	5,576	185	5,803	189
CUSTODIAL MOTHERS														
Total	11,505	264	11,607	278	11,872	281	11,499	277	11,291	260	11,587	264	11,406	262
Awarded child support	6,878	207	7,123	220	7,080	219	7,150	220	7,110	208	7,436	213	7,002	207
Percent	59.8	1.2	61.4	1.2	59.6	1.2	62.2	1.2	63.0	1.1	64.2	1.1	61.4	1.1
Due child support	5,913	192	6,224	206	6,342	208	6,133	204	6,212	195	6,516	199	6,131	194
Average child support due	\$4,827	\$125	\$5,261	\$148	\$5,054	\$116	\$5,625	\$170	\$6,385	\$287	\$5,176	\$100	\$5,660	\$130
Average child support received	\$3,166	\$126	\$3,451	\$121	\$3,373	\$112	\$3,361	\$103	\$3,708	\$147	\$3,579	\$147	\$3,660	\$111
Received any child support	4,501	168	4,742	180	4,802	181	4,578	177	4,639	169	5,018	176	4,754	171
Percent	76.1	1.4	76.2	1.4	75.7	1.4	74.6	1.5	74.7	1.4	77.0	1.3	77.5	1.3
Received full amount of child support	2,178	118	2,674	136	2,945	142	2,818	139	2,815	132	2,948	135	2,900	134
Percent	36.8	1.6	43.0	1.6	46.4	1.6	45.9	1.7	45.3	1.6	45.2	1.5	47.3	1.6
Not awarded child support	4,627	170	4,484	175	4,792	181	4,349	172	4,181	160	4,151	160	4,404	165
CUSTODIAL FATHERS														
Total	2,184	118	2,108	121	2,077	120	2,030	118	2,092	114	2,364	121	2,199	117
Awarded child support	922	77	844	76	796	74	795	74	807	71	940	77	800	71
Percent	42.2	2.7	40.0	2.8	38.3	2.8	39.2	2.8	38.6	2.7	39.8	2.5	36.4	2.6
Due child support	775	70	733	71	676	68	658	68	712	67	740	68	678	65
Average child support due	\$4,290	\$233	\$4,423	\$252	\$4,808	\$342	\$5,055	\$440	\$4,655	\$279	\$4,471	\$223	\$4,895	\$345
Average child support received	\$2,689	\$247	\$3,059	\$407	\$3,169	\$292	\$2,415	\$233	\$3,177	\$450	\$2,797	\$280	\$3,491	\$364
Received any child support	569	60	527	60	479	58	427	54	480	55	530	58	505	56
Percent	73.4	4.0	71.9	4.4	70.9	4.6	64.9	4.9	67.4	4.4	71.6	4.1	74.5	4.2
Received full amount of child support	288	43	270	43	295	45	248	42	278	42	342	46	292	43
Percent	37.2	4.4	36.8	4.7	43.6	5.0	37.7	5.0	39.0	4.6	39.0	4.5	46.2	4.8
Not awarded child support	1,262	90	1,263	93	1,281	94	1,235	92	1,285	89	1,424	160	1,399	93

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 1994–2006. All child support income amounts are adjusted to reflect 2005 dollars using the CPS-U-RS. For more information on the CPI, go to <www.bls.gov/cpi/cpirsdc.htm>.

12-year trends by comparing data collected from the 1994 April CPS and subsequent biennial surveys. (See Text Box 1 for additional survey information and notes on limitations of the data.)

Custodial Parents and Their Children

In the spring of 2006, an estimated 13.6 million parents had custody of 21.2 million children under 21 years of age while the other parent lived somewhere else.³ The number of custodial parents has remained statistically unchanged since 1994 (Table 1). The 21.2 million children living with their custodial parent represented 26.0 percent of all 81.6 million children under 21 years old living in families. Among White children in families, 22.0 percent lived with their custodial parents. The proportion of Black children in families who lived with their custodial parent while their other parent lived outside their household (48.5 percent) was more than twice as large as the proportion of White children.⁴

Demographic Characteristics

In 2006, 5 of every 6 custodial parents were mothers (83.8 percent) and 1 in 6 were fathers

³ The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

⁴ See Detailed Table 11 at www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html.

(16.2 percent), proportions that are not statistically different than in 1994.⁵

The distribution of custodial parents by marital status differed for mothers and fathers. One-third (32.8 percent) of custodial mothers had never been married. The remaining ever-married mothers included 44.2 percent who were currently divorced or separated, 21.7 percent who were currently married (most of whom [68.5 percent] were divorced but remarried), and 1.3 percent who were widowed. Custodial fathers were less likely than custodial mothers to report they had never married (17.8 percent) and more likely to be divorced or separated (57.3 percent).

The age of custodial mothers, the largest group of custodial parents, has increased since 1994. That year, one-quarter (25.4 percent) were 40 years or older. By 2006, the proportion had grown to over one-third (37.7 percent). Likewise, the proportion of custodial mothers under 30 years of age decreased from 30.9 percent in 1994 to 25.8 percent by 2006. The educational level of custodial mothers increased during the past 12 years. In 1994, 22.2 percent of custodial mothers had less than a high school education, and 17.1 percent had at least an associate's degree. By 2006, the proportion of custodial mothers who had not graduated from high school decreased to 15.1 percent, and the proportion

⁵ See Detailed Table 4 at www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html.

with at least an associate's degree increased to 25.6 percent.⁶

Over half (52.7 percent) of custodial mothers were non-Hispanic White, more than one-quarter were Black (27.8 percent), and 16.3 percent were Hispanic.⁷ Custodial fathers were more likely than custodial mothers to be non-Hispanic White (71.0 percent) and less likely to be Black (11.6 percent).

While the majority of custodial parents had one child (57.3 percent), custodial mothers were more likely

⁶ The proportion of custodial mothers who were 40 years or older in 1994 (25.4 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial mothers who were under 30 years of age in 2006 (25.8 percent), which was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial mothers with an associate's degree (25.6 percent). The proportion of custodial mothers with an associate's degree in 1994 (17.1 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial mothers who had not graduated from high school in 2006 (15.1 percent).

⁷ Federal surveys now give respondents the option of reporting more than one race. Therefore, two basic ways of defining a race group are possible. A group, such as Black, may be defined as those who reported Black and no other race (the race-alone or single-race concept) or as those who reported Black regardless of whether they also reported another race (the race-alone-or-in-combination concept). The body of this report (text, figures, and tables) shows data for people who reported they were the single race White and not Hispanic and people who reported the single race Black. Use of the single-race populations does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches. See Detailed Table 12 at www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html for a listing of custodial parents by racial group.

Because Hispanics may be any race, data in this report for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for the Black population. Based on the 2006 CPS April supplement, 3.6 percent of Black custodial parents were Hispanic. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population and the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population are not shown in this report because of their small sample size in the April 2006 CPS.

than custodial fathers to have two or more children living with them in 2006 (44.2 percent and 35.0 percent, respectively).

Poverty

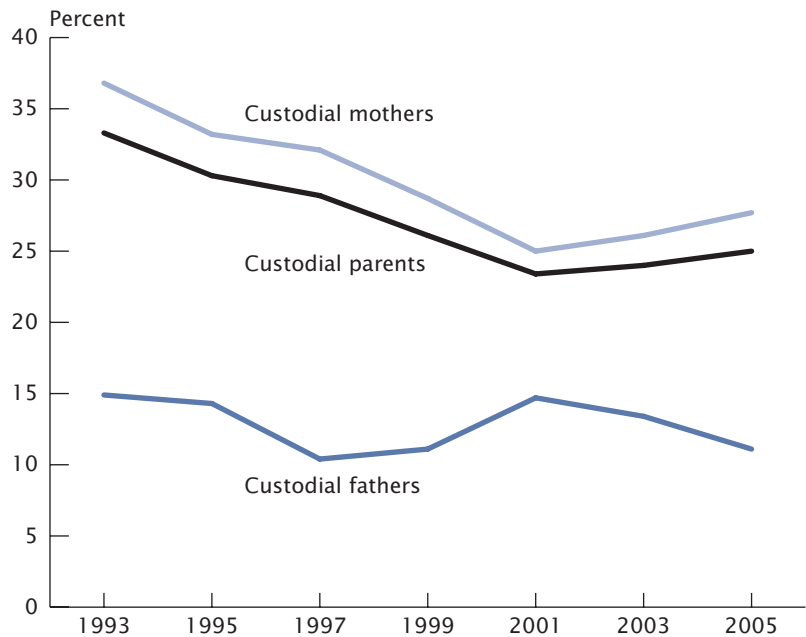
The proportion of custodial parents and their children living below the poverty level declined from 33.3 percent in 1993 to 23.4 percent in 2001 and has remained statistically unchanged since then (Figure 1). Poverty levels varied among custodial-parent groups. While the poverty rate of custodial mothers fell from 36.8 percent in 1993 to 27.7 percent in 2005, it remained higher than the poverty rate among custodial fathers, 11.1 percent. Custodial parents who were young (under 30 years of age), Black, or never married had poverty rates of 36 percent to 40 percent (rates not statistically different from each other) that were higher than poverty rates for their counterparts in their respective demographic groups. Custodial parents with full-time, year-round employment had a poverty rate of 6.9 percent, while custodial parents who did not work or who were participants in public assistance programs had poverty rates of about 60 percent in 2005.⁸

Employment and Participation in Government Assistance Programs

The level of full-time, year-round employment increased among custodial parents from 45.6 percent to 53.7 percent between 1993 and 1999, and has remained statistically unchanged since. Over one-quarter (26.9 percent) of custodial parents were in the labor force

⁸ See Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>. The proportion of custodial parents below poverty in 1993 (33.3 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial mothers below poverty in 1993 (36.8 percent).

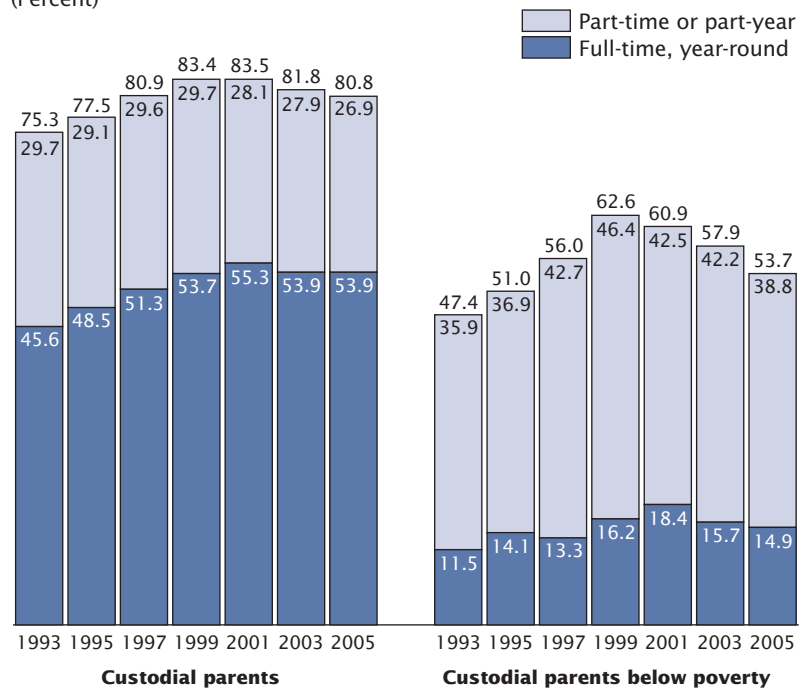
Figure 1.
Poverty Status of Custodial Parents: 1993–2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 1994–2006.

Figure 2.
Employment Status of Custodial Parents by Poverty Status: 1993–2005

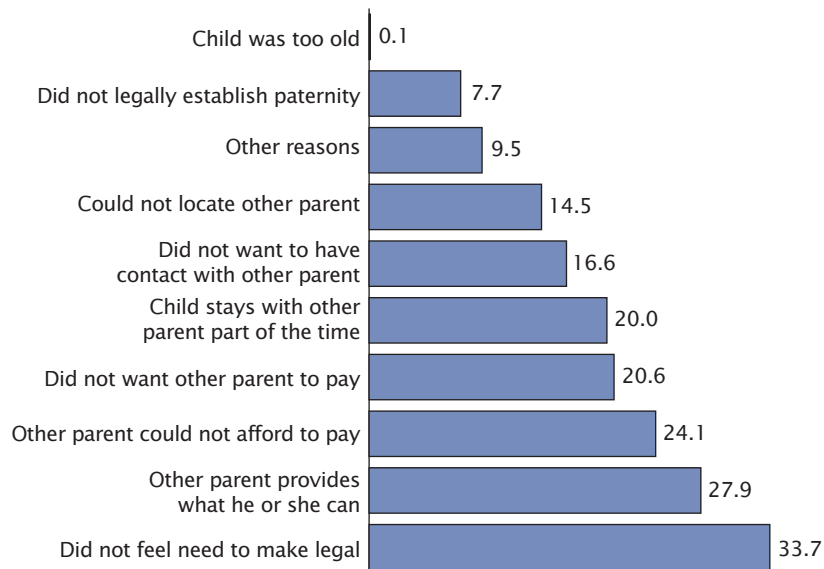
(Percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 1994–2006.

Figure 3.
Reasons No Legal Agreement Established for Custodial Parents: 2006

(Percent)



Note: Universe is 6.1 million custodial parents without agreements or with informal agreements; excludes those with pending agreements. Total exceeds 100 percent because respondents could list more than one reason.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 2006.

working part-time or part-year, and 19.2 percent did not work in 2005. In 1993, the proportion of custodial parents without employment was higher (24.7 percent).

Custodial mothers were less likely than custodial fathers to be employed, with one-half (50.1 percent) having full-time, year-round employment and more than one-quarter (28.5) having part-time or part-year employment in 2005. Among custodial fathers, 73.7 percent worked full-time, year-round, and 18.4 percent were employed part-time or part-year.

Among custodial parents in poverty, the proportion working either full- or part-time increased from 47.4 percent in 1993 to 62.6 percent in 1999, mostly as a result of the increase in the percentage working part-time or part-year (from 35.9

percent to 46.4 percent). Between 1999 and 2005, the percentage of custodial parents below the poverty threshold working either full-time or part-time declined from 62.6 percent to 53.7 percent. The remaining 46.3 percent of custodial parents in poverty were not employed in 2005 (Figure 2).⁹

Overall, rising employment rates of custodial parents were accompanied by declines in rates of participation in public assistance programs, which fell from 40.7 percent to 31.4 percent between

⁹ The proportion of custodial parents below poverty who worked either full-time or part-time in 1993 (47.4 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion in 2005 (53.7 percent) and the proportion working only part-time in 1999 (46.4 percent). The proportion of custodial parents working who worked either full- or part-time in 2005 (53.7 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents who did not work in 2005 (46.3 percent).

1993 and 2005, dropping as low as 28.4 percent in 2001.¹⁰ The proportion of custodial parents receiving AFDC/TANF fell from 22.0 percent to 5.8 percent between 1993 and 2005.¹¹

Agreements and Awards

Of the 13.6 million custodial parents in 2006, 7.8 million or 57.3 percent had some type of agreement or court award to receive financial support from the noncustodial parent for their children, a proportion that was statistically unchanged from 1994. The majority of these agreements (7.2 million) were reported by the custodial parent as formal legal agreements (established by a court or other government entity) and 600,000 were informal agreements or understandings.¹²

When custodial parents without any agreements and those with informal agreements were asked why a formal legal agreement was not established, the reasons most often cited were that they did not feel the need to go to court or get legal agreements (33.7 percent), the other parent provided what he or she could for support (27.9 percent), and they felt the other parent could not afford to pay child support (24.1 percent, Figure 3).

¹⁰ Public assistance program participation includes receiving at least one of the following: Medicaid, food stamps, public housing or rent subsidy, TANF or AFDC, or general assistance. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), more commonly known as the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, replaced the AFDC Program with the TANF Program.

¹¹ See Detailed Table 4 at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>.

¹² An informal agreement is any written or verbal agreement or understanding that was never approved or ordered by a court or a government agency and is generally considered not legally binding. See Detailed Table 9 at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>.

Table 2.
Demographic Characteristics of Custodial Parents by Award Status and Payments Received: 2005

(Numbers in thousands, as of spring 2006. Parents living with own children under 21 years of age whose other parent is not living in the home)

Characteristic	With child support agreements or awards											
	Total	Total	Percent	Due child support payments in 2005								
				Total	Average due	Average received	Percent received	Received all payments		Did not receive payments		
								Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
ALL CUSTODIAL PARENTS												
Total	13,605	7,802	57.3	6,809	\$5,584	\$3,643	65.2	3,192	46.9	1,550	22.8	
Standard error	285	218	1.1	204	\$122	\$106	1.6	143	1.5	103	1.3	
Sex												
Male	2,199	800	36.4	678	\$4,471	\$2,797	62.6	292	43.1	174	25.7	
Female	11,406	7,002	61.4	6,131	\$5,176	\$3,579	69.1	2,900	47.3	1,377	22.5	
Age												
Under 30 years	3,194	1,613	50.5	1,352	\$4,063	\$2,296	56.5	532	39.3	343	25.4	
30 to 39 years	4,841	2,982	61.6	2,668	\$5,238	\$3,322	63.4	1,198	44.9	680	25.5	
40 years and over	5,571	3,207	57.6	2,789	\$6,652	\$4,603	69.2	1,461	52.4	528	18.9	
Race and Ethnicity¹												
White alone	9,493	5,748	60.5	5,038	\$5,893	\$4,041	68.6	2,475	49.1	1,032	20.5	
White alone, not Hispanic	7,570	4,783	63.2	4,167	\$6,010	\$4,146	69.0	2,096	50.3	825	19.8	
Black alone	3,431	1,699	49.5	1,484	\$4,514	\$2,250	49.8	584	39.4	457	30.8	
Hispanic (any race)	2,146	1,062	49.5	949	\$5,529	\$3,535	63.9	421	44.4	226	23.8	
Current Marital Status²												
Married	3,007	1,895	63.0	1,703	\$5,507	\$3,864	70.2	793	46.6	395	23.2	
Divorced	4,795	3,098	64.6	2,727	\$6,212	\$4,246	68.4	1,451	53.2	560	20.5	
Separated	1,506	750	49.8	638	\$6,205	\$3,623	58.4	255	40.0	158	24.8	
Never married	4,130	1,975	47.8	1,663	\$4,412	\$2,486	56.3	671	40.3	418	25.1	
Educational Attainment												
Less than high school diploma	2,062	975	47.3	791	\$5,019	\$2,429	48.4	309	39.1	228	28.8	
High school graduate	4,880	2,780	57.0	2,457	\$5,022	\$3,043	60.6	1,070	43.5	603	24.5	
Less than 4 years of college	4,568	2,813	61.6	2,482	\$5,561	\$3,750	67.4	1,192	48.0	556	22.4	
Bachelor's degree or more	2,096	1,235	58.9	1,079	\$7,326	\$5,651	77.1	620	57.5	163	15.1	
Selected Characteristics												
Family income below 2005 poverty level	3,406	1,796	52.7	1,502	\$4,756	\$2,446	51.4	595	39.6	412	27.4	
Worked full-time, year-round	7,331	4,294	58.6	3,825	\$5,756	\$3,782	65.7	1,887	49.3	861	22.5	
Public assistance program participation ³	4,273	2,402	56.2	2,032	\$4,556	\$2,437	53.5	780	38.4	566	27.9	
With one child	7,792	4,058	52.1	3,523	\$5,128	\$3,519	68.6	1,722	48.9	744	21.1	
With two or more children	5,813	3,744	64.4	3,287	\$6,072	\$3,775	62.2	1,470	44.7	806	24.5	
Child had contact with other parent in 2005	9,154	5,700	62.3	5,008	\$5,674	\$4,108	72.4	2,654	53.0	879	17.6	

¹Includes those reporting one race alone and not in combination with any other race.

²Excludes 200,000 with marital status of widowed.

³Received either Medicaid, food stamps, public housing or rent subsidy, TANF, or general assistance.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 2006.

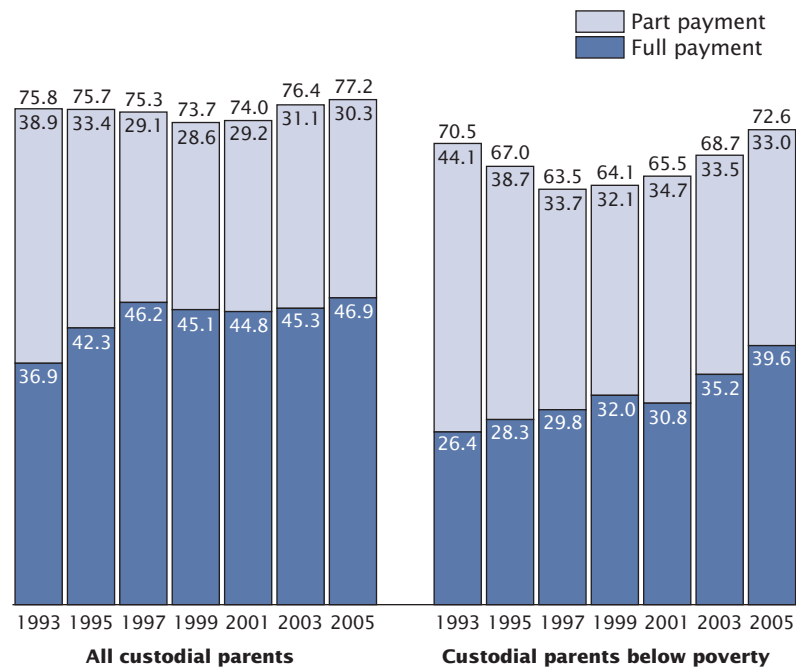
The percentage of custodial mothers who had child support agreements or awards in 1994 (59.8 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion in 2006 (61.4 percent), after rising to a high of 64.2 percent in 2004. The proportion of custodial fathers with child support agreements or awards has historically been lower

than the proportion of custodial mothers and continued to be lower in 2006 (36.4 percent).

Award rates varied by other demographic characteristics of the custodial parent. Some of the lowest rates of having child support agreements (approximately 50 percent) were found among custodial parents who were never married,

separated, Black, Hispanic, or who had less than a high school education. Higher rates of child support awards or agreements (about 63 percent) existed for custodial parents who were non-Hispanic White, currently married, divorced, or who lived with two or more children from an absent parent in 2006 (Table 2).

Figure 4.
Custodial Parents Receiving Part or Full Child Support Payments Due by Poverty Status: 1993–2005
 (Percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 1994–2006.

Child Support Receipt

Of the 7.8 million custodial parents with child support agreements or awards, 6.8 million (87.3 percent) were due child support payments in 2005.¹³ Nine of every 10 (90.0 percent) custodial parents due child support were mothers, and 1 in 10 (10.0 percent) were fathers (Table 2).

The proportion of custodial parents who received the full amount of child support due increased from 36.9 percent in 1993 to

¹³ The remaining 1.0 million custodial parents with child support agreements or awards were not due child support payments because either the child or children were too old, the noncustodial parent had died, the family lived together part of the year before the interview, or some other reason.

46.2 percent in 1997 and has remained statistically unchanged since. Another 30.3 percent of custodial parents received some but not all payments that were due in 2005. In total, 77.2 percent of custodial parents due support received at least some payments that were due in 2005, and 22.8 percent received no child support (Figure 4).

Receipt of child support due differed by demographic group. For the 1.5 million custodial parents below the poverty level and due child support in 2005, 72.6 percent received at least some child support payments. This included 39.6 percent who received all support that was due, an increase from 26.4 percent in 1993, and

33.0 percent who received less than the full amount of child support due, a decrease from 44.1 percent in 1993.¹⁴

The proportion of custodial mothers (47.3 percent) who received full payments in 2005 was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial fathers receiving full payments (43.1 percent). About 40 percent of custodial parents in each of the following groups received full child support: those who were never married, those who were Black, those less than 30 years of age, or those in poverty. A larger proportion (about 53 percent) of custodial parents who were divorced, 40 years of age or older, or whose child had contact with the noncustodial parent received full child support in 2005 (Figure 5).¹⁵

Custody and Visitation

A majority (85.3 percent) of the 6.8 million custodial parents due child support payments in 2005 had arrangements for joint child custody or visitation privileges with the noncustodial parent.

¹⁴ The proportion of custodial parents below poverty who received the full amount of child support in 2005 (39.6 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion receiving less than the full amount due in 2005 (33.0 percent) or in 1993 (44.1 percent). The proportion of custodial parents below poverty who received full support in 1993 (26.4 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion receiving less than the full amount due in 2005 (33.0 percent).

¹⁵ The proportion of custodial mothers receiving full child support in 2005 (47.3 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents in poverty who received full support (39.6 percent). The proportion of custodial fathers who received full support in 2005 (43.1 percent) was not statistically different from the proportions of custodial parents receiving full support who were never married (40.3 percent), Black (39.4 percent), under 30 years of age (39.3 percent), or in poverty (39.6 percent).

Among this group, 79.9 percent received at least some child support payments. The proportion of custodial parents with custody or visitation arrangements who received any child support ranged from 77.6 percent for those with visitation-only arrangements to 84.6 percent for those having both joint custody and visitation arrangements. Of the custodial parents due child support who did not have either joint custody or visitation arrangements, 61.5 percent received child support payments.¹⁶

For the 5.8 million custodial parents without any agreements, or with agreements but not due child support, 66.2 percent had arrangements with the noncustodial parent for visitation privileges or some type of shared custody.

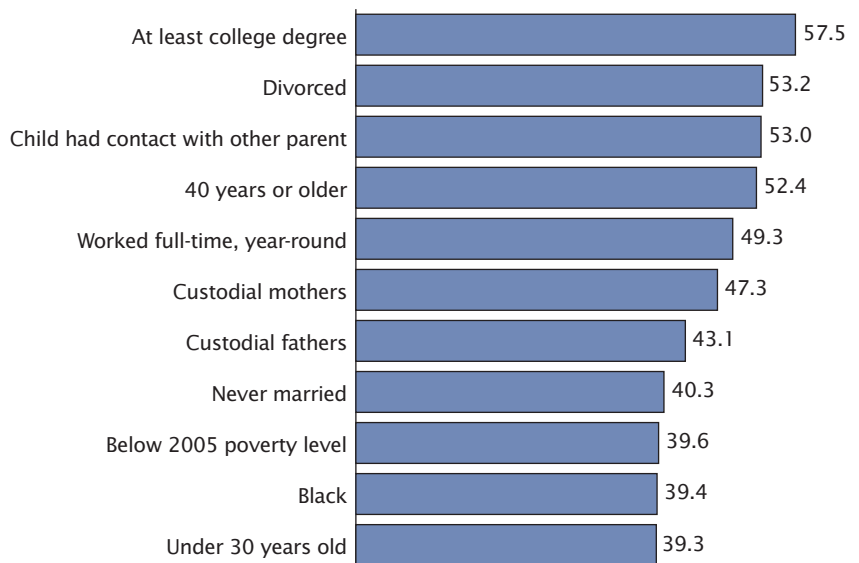
Amount of Child Support Received

In 2005, the 6.8 million custodial parents who were due child support under the terms of legal awards or informal agreements were due an annual average of \$5,600, or an average of \$465 per month (Table 1). Together, an aggregate of \$38.0 billion in child support payments were due custodial parents who had agreements for support. Of this amount, \$24.8 billion (65.2 percent) was reported

¹⁶ The proportion of custodial parents due support and having joint custody or visitation arrangements (85.3 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents with both joint custody and visitation arrangements who received any child support payments (84.6 percent). The proportion of custodial parents with joint custody or visitation arrangements who received any child support payments (79.9 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial parents with visitation-only arrangements who received any child support (77.6 percent). See Detailed Table 9 at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>.

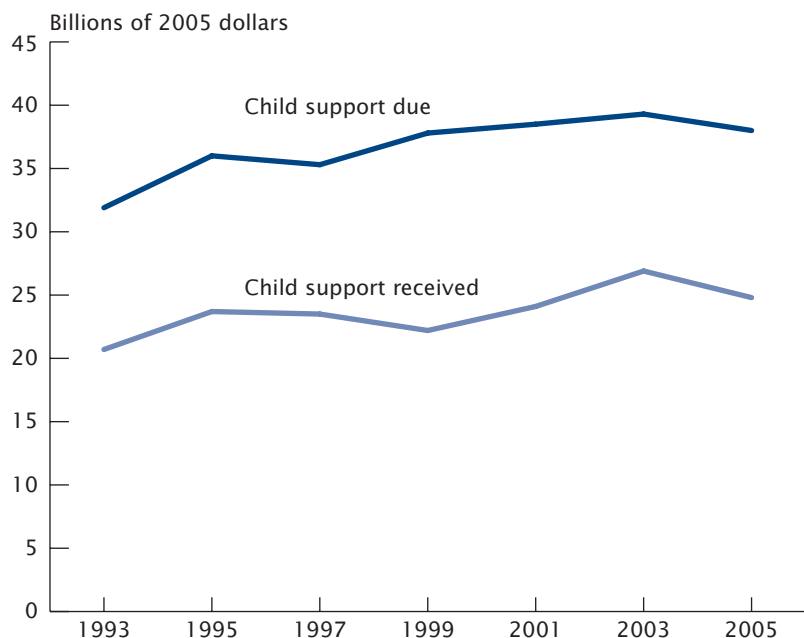
Figure 5.
Custodial Parents Due Child Support Receiving Full Amount by Selected Characteristics: 2005

(Percent)



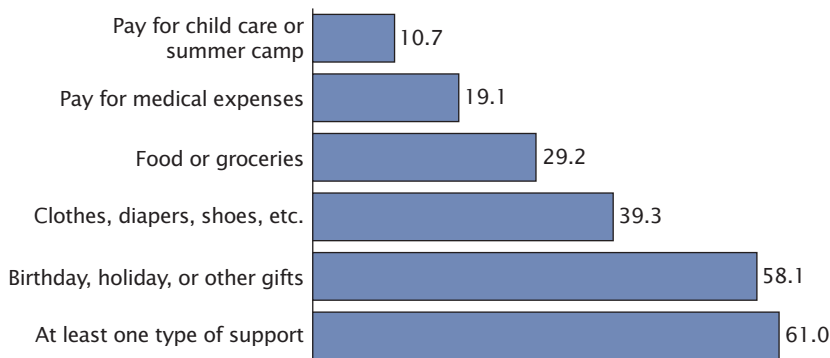
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 2006.

Figure 6.
Average Aggregate Child Support Due and Received: 1993–2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 1994–2006.

Figure 7.
Noncash Support Received by Custodial Parents: 2006
 (Percent)



Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondents could list more than one type.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 2006.

as received, averaging \$3,600 per custodial-parent family that was due child support payments. The 2005 proportion was not statistically different from the ratio in 1993, when \$20.7 billion of the \$31.9 billion in child support due was reported as received (Figure 6).¹⁷

In 2005, custodial mothers received \$22.4 billion of the \$34.7 billion in support that was due (64.7 percent), and custodial fathers received \$2.4 billion of the \$3.3 billion that was due (71.3 percent), proportions that were not statistically different from each other.¹⁸

Overall, custodial parents reported receiving \$25.9 billion directly from the noncustodial parent for support of their children in 2005, which included \$1.0 billion

¹⁷ The median amount of child support due in 2005 was \$4,100 and the median amount received was \$2,400 for all custodial parents due support. See Detailed Table 1 for median amounts of child support and Detailed Table 7 for distributions of child support due and received at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>.

¹⁸ See Detailed Table 1 at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>.

received by parents without current awards or agreements.¹⁹

Child Support and Income

The average amount of child support received by the 5.3 million custodial parents who received at least some of the support they were due (\$4,700) represented 16.0 percent of their average income in 2005 (\$29,500). Child support represented 10.7 percent of income for the 2.1 million parents who received less than full support due and 18.8 percent for the 3.2 million custodial parents who received all the child support that they were due. Child support represented a higher proportion of income for some lower income parents. For example, among custodial parents below the poverty level who received full payments, the average child support received (\$4,700) represented 60.3 percent of their average income.

¹⁹ Custodial parents receiving child support without current awards include those with awards for children past the age of eligibility for payments, those with awards officially starting after 2005, and those with no awards (no legal or nonlegal awards). They represented 500,000 custodial parents and received an average of \$1,900 in child support in 2005.

The average individual 2005 income for the 1.6 million custodial parents who received no child support payments was \$26,000, an increase in real terms of 23.0 percent from this group's average income 12 years earlier. Among the 5.8 million custodial parents with no support agreements, the average individual income was \$29,800 in 2005, an increase of 45.4 percent from this group's income in 1993.²⁰

Health Insurance

Of the 7.8 million custodial parents who had child support awards or agreements in 2005, 57.6 percent of their agreements specified who was to provide health insurance for their children. In 45.1 percent of these 4.5 million agreements, the absent parent provided the health insurance coverage.²¹ Among the 2.7 million custodial parents with agreements where health insurance was not included in the child support award, 11.6 percent received health care coverage for their children from the noncustodial parent. For the 5.8 million custodial parents without a child support agreement, 17.5 percent had health insurance coverage for their children through the noncustodial parent. Overall, approximately 3.3 million noncustodial parents provided some type of health insurance for their children.²²

²⁰ See Detailed Tables 4, 5, and 6 at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>.

²¹ Health insurance coverage could be through either a Health Maintenance Organization, a regular insurance policy, or some other plan. In many states, one or both parents could be obligated in a child support agreement to carry health insurance for their children. If the custodial parent is required to carry the coverage, the noncustodial parent may be required to contribute toward the cost of family coverage.

²² See Detailed Table 8 at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>.

Noncash Child Support

Sixty-one percent of all custodial parents received at least one type of noncash support, such as gifts or coverage of expenses, on behalf of their children. The proportion of custodial mothers receiving non-cash support (59.0 percent) was lower than that of custodial fathers (71.7 percent). Custodial parents with a child support agreement or award were more likely than those without awards to receive noncash support (65.3 percent and 55.3 percent, respectively).²³

The most common type of noncash support was gifts for birthdays, holidays, or other occasions (58.1 percent), followed by clothes (39.3 percent), food or groceries (29.2 percent), medical expenses other than health insurance (19.1 percent), and full or partial payments for child care or summer camp (10.7 percent, Figure 7).²⁴

²³ The proportion of custodial parents receiving some type of noncash support (61.0 percent) was not statistically different from the proportion of custodial mothers receiving some type of noncash support (59.0 percent).

²⁴ Total of percentages exceeds 100 because more than one type of noncash support may have been received. See Detailed Table 10 at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>.

Contact With Government for Assistance

In 2006, 30.8 percent of all custodial parents had ever contacted a child support enforcement office (IV-D office), state department of social services, or other welfare or TANF office for child support-related assistance. This was a decrease from 1994, when 42.2 percent of custodial parents contacted a government agency for help. In addition, the total number of individual contacts for related assistance decreased 22.0 percent during this time, from 13.0 million to 10.1 million. Contacts were made for many reasons, but the most likely were to collect child support that was due (28.8 percent), to establish a legal agreement or court award (24.3 percent), to obtain welfare or public assistance (13.9 percent), and to locate the noncustodial parent (11.2 percent).²⁵

SOURCE OF THE DATA

The population represented (the population universe) in the Child Support Supplement to the April

²⁵ See Detailed Table 2 at <www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/detailedtables.html>.

2006 CPS is the civilian noninstitutionalized population living in the United States. The institutionalized population, which is excluded from the population universe, is composed primarily of the population in correctional institutions and nursing homes (91 percent of the 4.1 million institutionalized people in Census 2000).

Most estimates in this report are from the 1994 through 2006 April biennial supplements to the CPS. The Census Bureau conducts the April supplement sponsored, in part, by the Office of Child Support Enforcement of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Data from the April 1992 and earlier supplements are not directly comparable with data from 1994 and later years because of changes made to the questionnaire (see Text Box 1 for more detail). Because of changes made to the allocation procedures, data for custodial parents due and receiving child support were revised starting with the April 1994 survey. Reported estimates may differ from those published previously due to these changes.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling error and non-sampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level. This means the 90-percent confidence interval for the difference between estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling error in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately answers are coded and classified. To minimize these errors, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures in sample selection, the wording of questions, interviewing, coding, data processing, and data analysis.

The CPS weighting procedure uses ratio estimation whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but biases may still be present when people who are missed by the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. How this weighting procedure affects other variables in the survey is not precisely known. All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

Further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates, including standard errors and confidence intervals, can be found at www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/source03.pdf or by

contacting Rebecca Olson of the Demographic Statistical Methods Division via e-mail at dsmd.source.and.accuracy@census.gov.

MORE INFORMATION

Detailed tabulations, related information, and historic data are available on the Internet at the Child Support Page on the Census Bureau's Web site at www.census.gov/hhes/www/childsupport/childsupport.html.

For additional questions or comments, contact Timothy Grall at 301-763-6685 or via e-mail at Timothy.Scott.Grall@census.gov.

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